

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TANZANIA PROPOSES PERMANENT BORDER CLOSURE FOR TOURISM

1. KENYA NEWS MEDIA REPORTED MARCH 21 SPEECH BY ESROM MARYOGO, GENERAL MANAGER OF TANZANIA TOURIST CORPORATION, IN WHICH MARYOGO STATED BORDER WITH KENYA QUOTE WILL NEVER BE RE-OPENED UNQUOTE FOR TOURIST PURPOSES. REPORTEDLY, MARYOGO CLAIMED TANZANIA HAD RECEIVED LITTLE BENEFIT FROM PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENTS EVEN THOUGH TANZANIA HAD SUBSIDIZED KENYAN TOURISM FOR MANY YEARS. HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT TANZANIA HAD RECEIVED QUOTE NOTHING BUT INSULTS IN RETURN UNQUOTE.

2. KENYANS WERE QUICK TO REACT TO MARYOGO'S CHARGES. AT MARCH 22 PRESS CONFERENCE, RICHARD MAINA, GM OF KENYA TOURIST DEVELOPMENT CORP., REJECTED THE CLAIM THAT TANZANIA HAD AT ANY TIME SUBSIDIZED KENYA'S TOURIST INDUSTRY AND DENIED QUOTE IN TOTALITY THE STATEMENT THAT WE AT ANY TIME INSULTED TANZANIA UNQUOTE. MAINA WENT ON TO SAY THAT KENYA'S PROMOTION OF EAST AFRICA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION HAS BEEN DONE WITHOUT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ITS NEIGHBORS AND THAT THE FREE MOVEMENT OF TOURISTS BETWEEN
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THE TWO COUNTRIES, NOT RESTRICTIONS, WAS THE BEST WAY TO DERIVE MUTUAL BENEFITS.

3. COMMENT: GOK OFFICIALS WE HAVE SPOKEN TO ARE CLEARLY CONFUSED OVER MARYOGO'S SPEECH. ALTHOUGH PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND REOPENING OF THE BORDER HAS NOT BEEN MOVING SMOOTHLY OF LATE, GOK TOURISM

AND AVIATION OFFICIALS HAD BELIEVED THAT TOURISM AND AIR TRAFFIC COULD BE AREAS OF ACCOMODATION SINCE THERE WERE CLEAR BENEFITS TO TANZANIA. THIS SEASON (NOVEMBER 1977 - APRIL 1978) HAS BEEN A BOOM TIME FOR THE KENYA COAST. FOREIGN BED-NIGHTS ON THE COAST IN 1977 INCREASED BY OVER 20 PERCENT FROM 1976 AND TOURIST ARRIVALS FROM GERMANY AND SCANDINAVIA (WHO GENERALLY COME FOR BEACH, AS OPPOSED TO UPCOUNTRY, HOLIDAYS) WERE OVER 10 PERCENT HIGHER THAN IN 1976. GOK TOURISM OFFICIALS BELIEVE TANZANIA CANNOT COMPETE WITH KENYA'S BETTER DEVELOPED COAST IN ATTRACTING VISITORS BUT COULD ATTRACT MANY OF THESE TOURISTS FOR VISITS TO THE SUPERIOR TANZANIA GAME PARKS. GOK OFFICIALS ARE MYSTIFIED OVER AN APPARENT TANGOV DECISION TO DEPRIVE ITSELF PERMANENTLY OF WHAT COULD BE A LUCRATIVE REVENUE SOURCE.

4. TANZANIAN HARD-LINE ON TOURISM, HOWEVER, COULD BE ATTEMPT TO EXERT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON GOK FOR RESOLUTION OF ISSUES WHICH WILL LEAD TO NORMALIZATION OR TO ADD ADDITIONAL BARGAINING POINT. SINCE GOK ASSUMED TOURISM WOULD BE ONE OF THE EASIEST ISSUES TO RESOLVE, THIS MAY INDEED APPEAR TO BE A USEFUL PRESSURE POINT.
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